

# Chemical Tree Farming- They Call This Forestry?

by Vivian Parker

**Our local forests are inundated by a cocktail of toxic chemicals, and the EPA isn't paying enough attention.**

Chemical herbicides are applied in large quantities to the forests of California each year, nearly 214,000 pounds in 2005. After clearcutting, the chemicals are used to kill the native species which will naturally re-grow, in order to prepare the soil for commercial conifer planting. Spraying may occur right up to the banks of the creeks and domestic water supply ditches. Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) has vigorously opposed efforts by the public and courts to require the company to conduct a thorough scientific analysis of their use of chemical herbicides. The forest products community is complicit in a pervasive myth that forestry herbicides have been widely tested and are "safe." *Safety* is a relative term, and toxic products should never be used where they are not absolutely necessary.

### Toxic Parade

Let's take a brief tour of some of the herbicidal chemicals most commonly used in our community. The chemicals used most frequently in Northern California by timber companies are

glyphosate, triclopyr, atrazine, hexazinone, imazapyr, and 2,4-D.

Glyphosate with the surfactant POEA (active ingredients in the popular commercial weed killer Roundup) is highly toxic to amphibians, humans and wildlife, and has been linked to reproductive disorders and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer that has increased 80% since Roundup's debut in 1971. The product is also the world's most commonly used herbicide, and is used on genetically modified "Roundup Ready" crops, making it virtually ubiquitous in the environment. It has also been linked to attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders in children.

The ester form of triclopyr (Garlon 4, for example) is highly toxic to rainbow trout and salmon. The principal breakdown product of triclopyr, TCP, is a neuro toxin that accumulates in fetal brain tissue.

Atrazine is a known ground water pollutant and suspected carcinogen and endocrine disruptor that causes male frogs to develop ovaries. Hexazinone is similar to atrazine and may behave as an endocrine disruptor as well, but has never been tested for this possibility.

Finally, 2,4-D contains dioxin, one of the most carcinogenic compounds in the world. 2,4-D has been proven to cause birth defects, low sperm count, developmental neuro toxicity in the brains of fetuses, and is toxic to fish at minute concentrations.

### Catastrophic Combinations

Health and environmental concerns are also raised by the use of mixtures of chemicals. All herbicides are routinely mixed with other chemicals, in some instances rendering a benign chemical into a deadly one. The EPA, however, requires testing of only the individual molecule, not the actual mixture. These

chemicals are definitely not "safe" to use where they may be carried into drinking water, particularly where they may be consumed by children, pregnant women, the elderly or anyone with compromised immune systems.

## The Traveling Bohemians Hosts the Following Monthly Events:

### Poetry Open Mic

Day: Second Wednesday Each Month

Time: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Place: Sue's Java Café

1712 Churn Creek Road, Redding

Contact: Nadia Hava-Robbins 229-7818

We welcome original poetry, poetry with music/dance, favorite poems/poets, and all those who like to listen! Also welcomed are singer/songwriters, storytellers, etc.

### Open Mic – Open Floor

Day: Third Friday Each Month

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Old City Hall Performing Arts Center

1313 Market St. Redding

Contact: Nadia Hava-Robbins 229-7818

More than just an open mic – an Open Floor for Dancers, Musicians, Storytellers, Actors, etc., and of course Audience!  
Donations Accepted.

## Wood Products Certification Systems Which is Better?

As you shop for wood products, you may notice two competing wood certification systems in stores: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI). For consumers who want their dollars to support healthy forests, understanding the difference between these two can guide our actions and help us make responsible consumer choices.

When you shop for wood, ask for FSC certified wood. As consumers, we can put pressure on retailers to make a larger effort to buy FSC wood and provide it to consumers. Both Home Depot and Lowe's have agreed to carry some FSC wood, but pressure from consumers will put pressure on them to expand their supplies.

Information taken from various sources.  
submitted by Sue Lynn

### Forest Stewardship Council, FSC

Certification system that is independent of the timber industry

Funded predominantly by independent sources

Establishes limits on large-scale clearcutting, prohibits replacement of natural forests by tree plantations

Encourages forest practices that reduce the need for routine intensive chemical use, bans the most toxic chemicals

Requires protections for rare old growth forests

Requires and implements protection for imperiled, threatened and endangered species

Prohibits replacement of forests by housing developments and other non-forest land use

Requires verification of compliance with FSC standards, including tracking of certified products from forest to stores

### Sustainable Forest Initiative, SFI

Certification system organized by the timber industry's American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA)

Funded primarily by AF&PA and its member companies

Allows clearcutting and replacement by tree plantations

Allows spraying of large clearcuts with toxic chemicals

Lacks protection for old growth forests

Allows logging of imperiled species' habitats

Fails to address this issue

Lacks tracking system for certified products